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POETRY LOVES COMPANY

BY DEBBIE DROOZ

Fortunately, front-list publishing isn't the only game in town. Serious poetry does find its way into print, thanks to the growing ranks of determined individuals who operate small, independent publishing houses. Even though Los Angeles isn't ordinarily thought of as a center of literary activity, it does have some fine small presses. Of the many independent publishers working in and around town, here are a few who deserve special attention.

Best Poetry Magazine

Rattler. Heather Haley is convinced that just about everyone is a potential poetry-lover. The people who *claim* not to like it are really reacting against the dry, intimidating way it is often presented. People should respond to poetry the way they do to music, says Haley — intuitively. Haley and collaborator Peter Haskell's *Rattler* magazine, which combines poems, drawings and photographs by a number of local people, appears so infrequently that readers are often surprised to find it still exists. The most recent issue of *Rattler* was published this month, and contains a good number of heartfelt, generous poems by the likes of Chris Toll, P. Schneidre, Marisela Norte, Georgianne Deen and Ms. Haley. Amusingly gruesome cartoons by Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh buttress the text. Rattler *is available at Chatterton's Books, Amok, Art Works and the LACE Gallery bookstore.*

Best Poetry Catalog

Sun & Moon Press. Sun & Moon is a vital, flourishing independent press. Its catalog contains more than 500 titles, it has reliable distribution, and it is establishing an enviable reputation as a "quality" house. To the extent that success equals sales, Sun & Moon publishes successfully with startling frequency. Why has Douglas Messerli succeeded where other independents have failed? Because Sun & Moon walks the middle ground between the limited capabilities of tiny literary journals and the best-seller mentality of major publishing houses. Sun & Moon is a *relatively* small house with a low overhead, so it can afford to take risks on first novels, poetry and even literary criticism, all of which are commercially dubious properties. Look for *The Sophist* by Charles Bernstein, and *Give Em Enough Rope* by Bruce Andrews. *For a copy of the catalog, send an S.A.S.E. to Sun & Moon Press, 6363 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 115, L.A. 90048.*

Best Poetry Anthologies

Bill Mohr's Momentum Press has published more work by local poets than any small press in Los Angeles: Kate Braverman's *Milkrun*, Jim Krusoe's *Small Pianos*, and Holly Prado's *Feasts*, to name just a few. But Mohr's crowning achievements are two anthologies that contain the best works of L.A.'s best poets (the glaring omission of work by Richard Meltzer aside). The first anthology, released in 1978 and entitled *The Streets Inside: Ten Los Angeles Poets*, is an indication of an awakening of popular interest in poetry. The second anthology, *Poetry Loves Poetry*, appeared in 1985 and features work by Wanda Coleman, Michael C. Ford, Amy Gerstler, Jack Skelley and many more. ■

and multi-leveled contours make it ideal for strolling and afford numerous hidden nooks and quiet spots. Well, imagine no further, because such a park actually exists. The only thing is, it's apparently been dead for some time. Its grass is brown and lifeless, its former lush landscaping only a faded memory. Various sections of old cement stairways lead up and down to nowhere in particular, and chunks of broken, graffitied walls no longer delineate the boundaries of anything. Trash litters the entire area, and one of the piles of debris, with dilapidated sofas and chairs and large chunks of abandoned cars, looks like it was a two-family garage rummage sale that ran away from home and died. Adding to the mystery of this forsaken place is the fact that there are no posted signs indicating what the property was, is or will be. R.I.P. *Located between Second St. and Third St., east of Lucas.* (KM)

Best Street To Take When You Want To Get From Downtown to Santa Monica in a Hurry

Olympic Boulevard. In the late 1920s, at the birth of our auto-cracy, the city upgraded several east-west streets to boulevard status. Over the years, their broad expanses became clogged with traffic, too. But Olympic Boulevard, with its perfectly timed lights and multiple lanes, still moves at a pretty good clip. Traditionally, the Transportation Department claims, the ci-

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